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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#) [IT](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA PEACE PROCESS - ITALIANS SEEK US SUPPORT

REF: NAIROBI 01752

Classified By: Pol M/C Tom Countryman for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

Summary

11. (C) Bruno Cabras, MFA Director General for Sub-Saharan Africa, requested a meeting with Pol M/C to discuss EU actions on and request US assistance for the Somalia National Reconciliation Conference. Cabras stressed that the peace process must result in a minimal level of stability and governance. He stated that negotiations are at a "make-it or break-it point" and that the EU is working hard to ensure a positive outcome by issuing a EU declaration (expected May 18) and demarching IGAD capitals in preparation for the May 20 meeting. Cabras requested that the US support these efforts by sending a visible signal of interest and encouragement to IGAD members, encouraging Ethiopia to be cooperative and consistent, and convincing the UN to support the African Union (AU) in its efforts to provide observers/peacekeepers and enforce the UN arms embargo. Cabras focused on the need for political and diplomatic support and was cautiously optimistic that the current negotiations could result in a peace agreement and a sustainable cessation of hostilities, especially if "encouragement" from the US and the UN is perceived by the parties. He expressed concern that if there are no positive results then the situation could deteriorate even further and present a serious security concern in the region. End Summary.

Italian/EU Role

12. (C) Due to Italian efforts, Cabras stated that there is increasing interest among EU countries, especially the UK, Ireland, France, Denmark and Sweden in ensuring a successful outcome to the peace process. In addition to issuing a declaration in Brussels and Dublin (expected May 18), Cabras stated that the EU countries are working to develop points to help guide the May 20 negotiations and resolve the main issues concerning the selection of the transitional assembly members and powersharing agreements. Cabras stressed that these issues must be resolved in order to ensure a minimal level of stability and governance.

13. (C) Once a peace agreement and a cessation of hostilities are achieved, the EU and the international community can begin to provide humanitarian and development assistance. Cabras mentioned that Italy would host a donor's conference in Rome and that the EC has funds, previously earmarked for Somalia, that will be available if an agreement is reached.

US Support

14. (C) Cabras stated that US support is crucial to making the peace process succeed. He requested US support in three areas. First, that the US exhibit a greater sense of interest in and encouragement for the process by visibly sending a signal of support to IGAD members prior to the May 20 meeting. Cabras believes that a US message of support coupled with the EU declaration and demarches in IGAD capitals will show a degree of international interest and help move the process forward.

15. (C) Second, that the US encourage and reassure the Ethiopians that it is in their best interest to have the peace process succeed and that their security concerns are well known and will be taken into consideration. Cabras commented that the Ethiopians had returned to the IGAD Facilitation Committee, appeared to have put aside their differences with Djibouti and participated positively in the May 6 meeting. He stressed that for the process to succeed the Ethiopians must continue to be cooperative participants.

16. (C) Third, Cabras requested US help in convincing the UN to take on a more proactive role by supporting the steps achieved in Nairobi and by providing support to the AU's peacekeeping project. Specifically, Cabras felt the UN could:

provide the AU support with its feasibility study for peacekeeping; provide professional knowledge and experience in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and

monitoring; provide expertise in institutional and capacity building; assist with the proper channeling of Somali diaspora interests; and more actively enforce the UN arms embargo.

Security

17. (C) Cabras expressed concern about immediate and future security issues stating that if the peace process succeeds the international community would need to carefully monitor the subsequent transformation and the new leadership. He stated that security in Somalia needed to be managed at a political level and not only through security measures. He stated that there has been an increase in the presence and activity of terrorist groups and in the flow of arms into Somalia. Lastly, he stated that due to the "winner take all" nature of the process, internal factions could resist the new leadership and thus lead to a repressive regime. Cabras stressed that EU, US, UN and international interest and support are crucial to make the process succeed, to ensure that agreements are real and respected and to ensure greater regional and international security.

Action Request

18. (C) Pol M/C thanked Cabras and assured him that post would relay his requests to the Department. Post requests guidance regarding the USG view of the Somalia peace process and specific responses to Cabras' requests.

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